

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1-18 (canceled)

19. (currently amended): A method of monitoring and tracking temperatures of a food item comprising:

- providing identity data identifying the food item;
- measuring a first temperature value of the food item with a temperature measuring device;
- transmitting the first temperature value of the food item to a computer; and
- storing at the computer the first temperature value of the food item in association with the identity data, so that a record of the temperature of the food item is maintained.

20. (original): The method of monitoring and tracking temperatures of claim 19 wherein providing identity data further comprises:

- reading with a hand-held data collector a label on the food item, the label having the identity data; and
- transmitting the identity data to the computer.

21. (currently amended): The method of monitoring and tracking temperatures of claim 20 further comprising measuring the first temperature value with a temperature measuring device in electrical communications with the hand-held data collector.

22. (currently amended): The method of monitoring and tracking temperatures of claim 21 further comprising transmitting the first temperature value from the hand-held data collector to the computer.

23. (original): The method of monitoring and tracking temperatures of claim 22 further comprising:

- transmitting temperature related data for the food item from the computer to the hand-held data collector; and
- printing a label for the food item using a printer in electrical communications with the hand-held data collector, the label containing information relating to the temperature related data.

24. (original): The method of monitoring and tracking temperatures of claim 19 wherein providing identity data further comprises providing with the computer a tracking number identifying the food item.

25. (currently amended): The method of monitoring and tracking temperatures of claim 19 further comprising:

measuring the first temperature value with a temperature measuring device in electrical communications with the computer; and

transmitting the first temperature value from the temperature measuring device to the computer.

26. (original): The method of monitoring and tracking temperatures of claim 25 further comprising transmitting an identity of the temperature measuring device to the computer.

27. (original): The method of monitoring and tracking temperatures of claim 19 further comprising:

measuring a plurality of temperature values of the food item at different times with the temperature measuring device;

transmitting the plurality of temperature values of the food item to the computer; and

storing at the computer the plurality of temperature values of the food item in association with the identity data, so that a time record of the plurality of temperature values of the food item over time is maintained.

28. (currently amended): The method of monitoring and tracking temperatures of claim 19 further comprising:

detecting a nonconformance of the first temperature value of the food item with respect to specified temperature values for the food item; and

providing an alert signal in response to detecting the nonconformance of the first temperature value.

29. (currently amended): A The method of monitoring and tracking temperatures of a ~~food item claim 19~~ further comprising:

~~providing identity data identifying the food item;~~

measuring a the first temperature value ~~representing a temperature of the food item~~ at a first location;

transmitting ~~the first temperature value~~ and an identity of the first location to a the computer;

measuring a second temperature value representing a temperature of the food item at a second location;

transmitting the second temperature value and an identity of the second location to the computer; and

storing at the computer the ~~first and second temperature values~~ value and identities of the respective first and second locations in association with the identity data, so that a record of the temperature of the food item at different locations is maintained.

30. (currently amended): A The method of monitoring and tracking temperatures of a food item claim 19 further comprising:

~~providing identity data for the food item;~~  
~~measuring a first temperature value representing a temperature of the food item;~~  
~~transmitting the first temperature value to a computer;~~  
measuring a second temperature value representing a temperature of the food item;  
transmitting the second temperature value to a the computer; and  
storing at the computer the ~~first and second temperature values~~ value in association with the identity data, so that a record of the temperature of the food item over time is maintained.

31. (original): The method of monitoring and tracking temperatures of claim 30 further comprising measuring the first and the second temperature values at different times.

32. (original): The method of monitoring and tracking temperatures of claim 31 further comprising measuring the first and the second temperature values at different times at one food processing station.

33. (original): The method of monitoring and tracking temperatures of claim 31 further comprising measuring the first and the second temperature values at respective first and second food processing stations.

34. (original): The method of monitoring and tracking temperatures of claim 31 further comprising:

detecting a nonconformance of each of the first and the second temperature values of the food item with respect to specified temperature values for the food item;  
and

providing an alert signal in response to detecting a nonconformance of one of the first and the second temperature values.

35. (original): The method of monitoring and tracking temperatures of claim 31 further comprising:

measuring a plurality of first temperature values representing temperatures of the food item at a first food processing station;

transmitting the plurality of first temperature values to a computer;

measuring a plurality of second temperature values representing temperatures of the food item at a second food processing station;

transmitting the plurality of second temperature values to a computer; and

storing at the computer the plurality of the first and second temperature values in association with the identity data, so that over time a record of the temperature of the food item is maintained.

36. (original): A method of monitoring and tracking shelf life for a food item comprising:  
providing identity data identifying a food item;  
identifying a first location of the food item; and  
automatically determining a shelf life for the food item as a function of the identity  
of the first location.

37. (original): The method of monitoring and tracking shelf life of claim 36 further  
comprising:

identifying another location to which the food item is moved; and  
automatically determining and storing a new shelf life for the food item as a  
function of the first and other locations.

38. (original): The method of monitoring and tracking shelf life of claim 36 further  
comprising updating a table providing shelf-life values as a function of different food  
items and locations.

39. (original): The method of monitoring and tracking shelf life of claim 38 further  
comprising automatically determining a first date on which the food item is placed at the  
first location.

40. (original): The method of monitoring and tracking shelf life of claim 39 further  
comprising automatically generating an expiration date for a food item as a function of a  
shelf-life value and the first date.

41. (currently amended): A The method of monitoring and tracking expiration dates for  
a food item shelf life of claim 36 further comprising:

~~providing identity data identifying a food item;~~  
~~identifying a first location of the food item;~~  
determining a first date on which the food item is placed at the first location; and  
automatically determining a first expiration date for the food item as a function of  
the identity of shelf life at the first location and the first date.

42. (currently amended): The method of monitoring and tracking shelf life of claim 41  
further comprising:

identifying a second location to which the food item is moved;  
automatically determining a shelf life for the food item as a function of the identity  
of the second location;

determining a second date on which the food item is placed at the second  
location; and

automatically determining a new expiration date for the food item as a function of  
the shelf lives at the first and second locations and the first and second dates.

43. (currently amended): The method of monitoring and tracking ~~expiration-date~~ shelf life of claim 42 further comprising iterating steps in the process of claim 42 each time the food item is moved.

44. (currently amended): The method of monitoring and tracking ~~expiration-date~~ shelf life of claim 41 further comprising automatically providing an alert in response to the new expiration date exceeding a maximum expiration date for the food item.

45. (currently amended): A method of monitoring and tracking ~~expiration-dates~~ shelf lives for food items comprising:

(a) receiving and storing identity data identifying food items;

(b) determining and storing a first date on which each of the food items is placed at a first location;

(c) automatically determining and storing

(1) a first ~~expiration-date~~ shelf life for each of the food items as a function of the first location and

(2) a first expiration date for each of the food items as a function of the first shelf life and the first date;

(d) receiving and storing data identifying a second location to which one of the food items is moved;

(e) determining and storing a second date on which the one of the food items is placed at the second location; and

(f) automatically determining and storing

(1) a ~~new expiration-date~~ second shelf life for the one of the food items as a function of the ~~data-identifying the first and second locations~~ location and

(2) a new expiration date for the one of the food items as a function of the first and second shelf lives and the first and second dates.

46. (currently amended): The method of monitoring and tracking ~~expiration-dates~~ shelf lives of claim 45 further comprising iterating steps (e) and (f) each time one of the food items is moved to a new location.

47. (currently amended): The method of monitoring and tracking ~~expiration-dates~~ shelf lives of claim 45 further comprising automatically providing an alert in response to the new expiration date exceeding a maximum expiration date for the one of the plurality of food items.

48. (currently amended): The method of monitoring and tracking ~~expiration dates~~ shelf lives of claim 45 further comprising:

automatically ~~reviewing~~ calculating expiration dates for all of the food items having first identity data in response for a request to use a food item having the first identity data;

automatically identifying a food item having ~~an oldest~~ a closest expiration date; and

automatically providing an output identifying a location of the food item having the ~~oldest~~ closest expiration date.

49. (currently amended): The method of monitoring and tracking ~~expiration dates~~ shelf lives of claim 48 further comprising:

receiving input data corresponding to the food item having the ~~oldest~~ closest expiration date; and

automatically providing an output signal in response to receiving the input data corresponding to the food item having the ~~oldest~~ closest expiration date.

50. (original): A method of monitoring and tracking a food lot number for a food item comprising:

providing and storing in a monitoring and tracking system identity data identifying food items and food lot numbers associated with respective ones of the food items, each food lot number identifying a specific lot from which the food item was made by a particular manufacturer; and

generating a report using the monitoring and tracking system to identify the food items associated with a lot number input by a user.

51. (original): The method of monitoring and tracking a food lot number of claim 50 further comprising:

providing and storing a plurality of location codes representing respective locations at which each of the food items has been located in food handling and preparation processes; and

automatically generating a report using the monitoring and tracking system to identify locations of the food items associated with a lot number input by a user.

52. (original): The method of monitoring and tracking a food lot number of claim 50 further comprising:

providing and storing prepared food codes representing foods prepared using the food items; and

automatically generating a report using the monitoring and tracking system to identify prepared foods using food items associated with a lot number input by a user.